

Supercourse Newsletter

Feb. 28, 2010

www.pitt.edu/~super1/

www.bibalex.org/SuperCourse/Index.htm

www.bibalex.org/english/initiatives/SupercourseArchive.htm

Dear Friends

Chile Earthquake: Last night a very strong earthquake hit Chile, and a Tsunami was set loose. We worry about our friends and their families in Chile.

Eugene and Ali created a Just in Time lecture for the Chile Earthquake and Tsunami:

<http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec37191/index.htm>

It describes the scientific causes of earthquake, focusing on the earthquake in Chile. We would appreciate any comments that you may have on the lecture. Nicholas is in the process of translating this into Spanish.

Please distribute information about this earthquake throughout your University and to anyone interested in disasters.

Let it Snow, Let it Snow

This has been the worst month every in Pittsburgh for snow. Already we have had 1.5 meters in February which is the greatest snowfall that we have ever had in a month. It was much nicer being in Alexandria Egypt. If you have a job for Jan and I in warm weather, please let us know! We have missed 4 days of work, which has never occurred. The weather patterns most certainly are strange.

The snow goose need not bathe to make itself white. Neither need you do anything but be yourself. Laozi

WHO Bulletin: WHO is sending us information about the contents in their WHO Bulletin, and other movements at WHO. We will send these to you at the beginning of the month to keep you updated about WHO. We helped to bump up the page views of the Bulletin by providing information to our network. Last year the February edition of the Bulletin received 6,000 views, this year it received 7,000. I very much like the content of the Bulletin as it is the flagship journal for WHO and provides a very nice overview of global health. Please distribute this to your networks.

Caves and Silos:

I am an epidemiologist, most of my friends are epidemiologists, all my students are epidemiologists, and most of what I read is epidemiology. I even married Jan, an epidemiologist. Hmmm, it appears that I am trapped in an Epidemiology Cave, surrounded by epidemiology, epidemiology, epidemiology. I got to think about this as I went to celebrate

Chinese New year and talked with an 80 year old expert of Chinese History. It was fascinating. At the lunch I decided that we needed to do something about this, so we can learn from other professors.

At the University of Pittsburgh we decided to develop a program Pittsburgh Professors talking. It will be modeled after the TED talks (www.ted.com).

The TED talks are remarkable presentations by hugely creative people. Bill Gates for example presented on Malaria, and in the middle of his talk opened a jar and released 100s of mosquitoes. I presented there 6 years ago. Immediately after I presented a 300 pound female singer blasted out the blues for 20 minutes. (she was remembered a lot more than I)

What we plan to do is to have 3 Pittsburgh professor talks, the first in the area of science/health, etc the second in humanities/history, etc. The third will be professors demonstrating the passion for hobbies, e.g. singing, Banjo playing, eating in France, physics and music, etc.

All professors at our University would be invited. Management (e.g. deans, chairs, chancellors) would be included, but they would have to come to the sessions as one of us in Labor (professors).

I think this would be most cool, and would open a new hallway for the supercourse, that of lively, exciting, video where a professor of archaeology has to tell about what she thinks is the most important points in her field to other professors. We then want to post these on Youtube.

It would be great to try to develop something like this from your University where we can populate YouTube with the exciting lectures from professors world wide. Please let us know if you are interested (ronaldlaporte@gmail.com)

What difference is there, do you think, between those in Plato's cave who can only marvel at the shadows and images of various objects, provided they are content and don't know what they miss, and the philosopher who has emerged from the cave and sees the real things? Erasmus

Web Casting:

If any of you would to present about the Supercourse, we would be pleased to send to you up to date slides. Also, if you would like us to present to your school about the Supercourse, we can have one of us in Pittsburgh, or Nicholas, Francois, Kawkab, Eugene, Jesse, to give a web cast. Please let us know at ronaldlaporte@gmail.com.

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Let us think of our friends in Chile.

Ron, Faina, Eugene, Francois, Mita, Nicholas, Jesse, Ali, Kawkab, Vint, Ismail, Gil

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